

# Sample Affirmative Backup Brief

## AFF Backup: End Government Shutdowns Act

### Table of Contents:

<b>Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Summary of Bill.....	3
2. 4 Shutdowns Lasted Over a Day.....	3
3. List of 12 Appropriations Bills.....	4
<b>Extra Definitions.....</b>	<b>5</b>
4. Definition of ACRs (GAO).....	5
5. Definition of ACRs (CRS).....	5
<b>Facts.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Fact 1: Congress Controls the Budget.....</b>	<b>6</b>
6. Text of Constitution with Annotations.....	6
<b>Fact 2: Lack of a Budget Leads to Shutdowns.....</b>	<b>7</b>
7. If a New Budget isn't Passed, the Government Shuts Down.....	7
<b>Harms.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Harm 1: Shutdowns Disrupt Government Services.....</b>	<b>8</b>
8. Important Services Unavailable.....	8
9. Example: DOT Processes Hindered.....	8
10. Past Shutdowns Caused Numerous Closures.....	9
11. The Government Needs the Entire Workforce.....	9
12. Many Services Could Be In Danger.....	10
<b>Harm 2: Shutdowns Harm the Federal Workforce.....</b>	<b>11</b>
13. 2018 Shutdown Left 800,000 Without Pay.....	11
14. Shutdowns Also Affect Contractors.....	11
15. Example: DHS Estimates 72% of Workers Left Without Pay.....	11
16. Example: Johnny Zuagar.....	12
17. Background: Shutdowns Affect Non-Essential Workers.....	12
<b>Harm 3: Shutdowns Are Costly.....</b>	<b>13</b>
18. Shutdowns Harm Economic Growth and Certainty.....	13
19. Shutdowns Have Both Direct and Indirect Negative Impact.....	13
20. Shutdowns Harm Consumer and Investor Sentiment.....	14
21. Shutdowns Reduce Growth, Cause Spending.....	14
22. Shutdowns Cause Large Monetary Losses.....	15
<b>Plan.....</b>	<b>16</b>
23. Text of the End Government Shutdowns Act (S.2041).....	16
<b>Solvency.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ACRs Have Been Successful in the States.....</b>	<b>19</b>
24. Auto-CRs Work for the States and Could Improve Congress.....	19



25. Twenty States Successfully Use Auto-CRs.....	19
26. ACRs Have Worked in Rhode Island.....	20
27. ACRs Have Worked in Wisconsin.....	20
<b>Advantages.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Adv 1: Benefit from Continuing Government Services.....</b>	<b>21</b>
28. Auto-CRs Ensure Funding Continues, Prevent Shutdowns.....	21
<b>Adv 2: Federal Workforce Won't be Disrupted.....</b>	<b>21</b>
29. Plan Brings Stability for Federal Workers and Families.....	21
<b>Adv 3: Avoid Economic Damage.....</b>	<b>22</b>
30. Auto-CRs Improve Spending Efficiency.....	22
<b>Closers.....</b>	<b>23</b>
31. Benefits of Auto-CRs.....	23
32. Benefits outweigh the risks.....	23
<b>Answers to NEG Arguments.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Negligence of Constitutional Duties.....</b>	<b>24</b>
33. States with Auto-CRs Continue to Make Budgets, Avoid Brinkmanship.....	24
34. ACRs Encourage Bipartisan Discussion / SQ Threatens Shutdowns.....	25
35. ACRs Can Improve Overall Governance.....	26
<b>Continuation of Essential Services.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Rarity and Length of Shutdowns.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Tools to Avoid Shutdowns.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Incentives for Negotiation.....</b>	<b>27</b>
36. The Threat of Shutdowns Increases Polarization, Erodes Trust.....	27
<b>Irresponsible Spending.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Common Sense Policy.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>New Programs and Needs.....</b>	<b>28</b>
37. ACRs are Temporary.....	28



# Background

## 1. Summary of Bill

According to Congress.gov accessed March 2025,

*(Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information, providing access to bills, resolutions, voting records, and more, maintained by the Library of Congress using data from the House of Representatives and Senate.)*

**Congress.gov, “S.2041 - End Government Shutdowns Act”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2041>

“This bill provides continuing appropriations to prevent a government shutdown if any appropriations measure for a fiscal year has not been enacted before the fiscal year begins or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect. For an initial 120-day period, the bill provides appropriations to continue programs, projects, and activities for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year. The bill reduces the continuing appropriations by 1% after the first 120-day period and by an additional 1% for each subsequent 90-day period until the applicable appropriations legislation is enacted.”

## 2. 4 Shutdowns Lasted Over a Day

David Wessel, a senior fellow in Economic Studies at Brookings, stated on March 23rd of 2024,

*(David Wessel is a senior fellow in Economic Studies at Brookings and director of the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy. He joined Brookings in December 2013 after 30 years on the staff of The Wall Street Journal where, most recently, he was economics editor and wrote the weekly Capital column. David is the author of two New York Times best-sellers. He has shared two Pulitzer Prizes, one in 1984 for a Boston Globe series on the persistence of racism in Boston and the other in 2003 for Wall Street Journal stories on corporate scandals.)*

**Brookings, “What is a government shutdown?”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-is-a-government-shutdown-and-why-are-we-likely-to-have-another-one/>

“There have been four shutdowns where operations were affected for more than one business day. In 1995-1996, President Clinton and the Republican Congress were unable to agree on spending levels; the government shut down twice, for a total of 26 days. In 2013, a standoff over funding for the Affordable Care Act resulted in a 16-day shutdown. And in December 2018 and January 2019, a dispute over border wall funding led to a shutdown that lasted 35 days; it was a partial shutdown because Congress had previously passed five of the 12 appropriation bills.”



### 3. List of 12 Appropriations Bills

According to the website of Congressman Mike Simpson, accessed March 2025,

*(Michael Keith Simpson is an American politician serving as the U.S. representative for Idaho's 2nd congressional district since 1999.)*

simpson.house.gov, "What are the 12 Appropriations Subcommittees?" (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://simpson.house.gov/appropriations/12appropriationssubcommittees.htm>

"Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies **Twelve Appropriations Subcommittees determine discretionary funding for government functions. Each of these subcommittees produces one bill each year. Subcommittees include:**

- **Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for the USDA (except the Forest Service) and other agencies;
- **Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for the Department of Commerce, the Department of Justice, NASA, and other agencies;
- **Defense,** which oversees funding for the military, the intelligence community, and other national defense related agencies;
- **Energy and Water Development,** which oversees funding for the Department of Energy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies;
- **Financial Services and General Government,** which oversees funding for the Department of the Treasury, the Executive Office of the President, and other government functions;
- **Homeland Security,** which oversees funding for the Department of Homeland Security;
- **Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for the Department of the Interior, the EPA, the U.S. Forest Service, and a number of independent agencies;
- **Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and other agencies;
- **Legislative Branch,** which oversees funding for the House of Representatives (the Senate Legislative Branch oversees funding for the U.S. Senate), the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, and other legislative branch functions;
- **Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for military construction (including military housing), the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies;
- **State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs,** which oversees funding for the U.S. State Department, USAID, and related programs;
- **Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies,** which oversees funding for the Department of Transportation, HUD, and related agencies."



## Extra Definitions

### 4. Definition of ACRs (GAO)

The Government Accountability Office described ACRs in January of 1986 stating,

*(The United States Government Accountability Office is an independent, nonpartisan government agency within the legislative branch that provides auditing, evaluative, and investigative services for the United States Congress. It is the supreme audit institution of the federal government of the United States.)*

**gao.gov, “Continuing Resolutions and an Assessment of Automatic Funding Approaches”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/afmd-86-16.pdf>

“Under an automatic continuing resolution approach, funding for agency operations would become available automatically when appropriations bills are not passed on time. If such a mechanism were enacted into law, funding at a specified rate would be available without any further action by the Congress or the President. Under current continuing resolution procedures, both houses of the Congress and the President must act in order for funding to continue at either the same or different funding levels. **An automatic continuing resolution procedure would allow funding to continue without the interruptions associated with current continuing resolution procedures, such as votes, amendments, and presidential signatures or vetoes.**”

### 5. Definition of ACRs (CRS)

The Congressional Research Service stated on August 15th of 2023,

*(The Congressional Research Service (CRS), a part of the Library of Congress, is a nonpartisan public policy research arm of the United States Congress that provides research and analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate.)*

**Jessica Tollestrup, Analyst on Congress and the Legislative Process, Congressional Research Service, “Automatic Continuing Resolutions: Background and Overview of Recent Proposals”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://budgetcounsel.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/crs-automatic-continuing-resolutions-background-and-overview-of-recent-proposals-r41948-august-20-2015.pdf-.pdf>

“Currently, 12 regular appropriations acts fund the activities of most federal government agencies. When these acts are not completed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, Congress uses a continuing appropriations act, also known as a “continuing resolution” (CR), to provide interim funding until the annual appropriations process is complete. Some Members of Congress have proposed legislation to establish an automatic continuing resolution (ACR) mechanism that would ensure a source of funding for discretionary spending activities at a specified level in the event that the timely enactment of appropriations was disrupted. The funding would become available automatically at any point during the fiscal year when a funding gap occurred without any further congressional action being needed, and it would remain available for the duration that the ACR mechanism was in effect.”



## Facts

### Fact 1: Congress Controls the Budget

#### 6. Text of Constitution with Annotations

The online *Constitution Annotated*, prepared by attorneys for the Congressional Research Service, published by Congress.gov, accessed May 2025:

[https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S9-C7-1/ALDE\\_00001095/](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S9-C7-1/ALDE_00001095/)

“Article I, Section 9, Clause 7:

*No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.*

The Appropriations Clause establishes a rule of law to govern money contained in the Treasury, which is a term that describes a place where public revenue is deposited and kept and from which payments are made to cover public expenses.<sup>1</sup> As the Supreme Court has explained, that rule of law directs that no money can be paid out of the Treasury unless it has been appropriated by an act of Congress.<sup>2</sup> The Clause has roots in the practice of English parliaments, dating from at least the 1690s, of legislating both the means of raising public revenue and also dedicating, or appropriating, newly raised sums to particular purposes. State constitutions adopted after Independence continued this practice, in most instances expressly identifying an appropriation as a necessity for drawing funds from a state treasury. The proposition that a legislature should control the disbursement of public funds appears to have become so firmly rooted by the late 1780s that the Appropriations Clause itself attracted relatively little debate either in the Constitutional Convention where it was drafted or in the state conventions where it was ratified.”

## Fact 2: Lack of a Budget Leads to Shutdowns

### 7. If a New Budget isn't Passed, the Government Shuts Down

David Gamage, a professor at Maurer School of Law, wrote in the *Colorado Law Review* in 2015

David Gamage & David S. Louk, Preventing Government Shutdowns: Designing Default Rules for Budgets, 86 *Colorado Law Review* 181 (2015) (2015). (Accessed online March 25, 2025.)

Available at: <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/2418>

“In nearly every area of law and governance, default policies exist when lawmakers cannot pass new legislation—typically, the status quo simply remains in effect. To its detriment, U.S. budget making at both the state and federal levels lacks effective defaults. If a new budget isn’t passed by year end, there is no budget, and the government shuts down. This lack of defaults, coupled with a dysfunctional era of budgetary politics, has led to a number of recent high-profile and costly state and federal government shutdowns at the state and federal levels.”



# Harms

## Harm 1: Shutdowns Disrupt Government Services

### 8. Important Services Unavailable

David Wessel, a senior fellow in Economic Studies at Brookings, stated on March 23rd of 2024,

*(David Wessel is a senior fellow in Economic Studies at Brookings and director of the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy. He joined Brookings in December 2013 after 30 years on the staff of The Wall Street Journal where, most recently, he was economics editor and wrote the weekly Capital column. Wessel is the author of two New York Times best-sellers. He has shared two Pulitzer Prizes, one in 1984 for a Boston Globe series on the persistence of racism in Boston and the other in 2003 for Wall Street Journal stories on corporate scandals.)*

**Brookings, “What is a government shutdown?”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-is-a-government-shutdown-and-why-are-we-likely-to-have-another-one/>

“Shutdowns can be disruptive, leading to delays in processing applications for passports, small business loans, or government benefits; shuttered visitor centers and bathrooms at national parks; fewer food-safety inspections; and various inconveniences. Shutdowns are sufficiently likely that the White House Office of Management & Budget posts detailed contingency plans that government agencies maintain for shutdowns, as well as a 51-page Q&A on shutdown procedures.”

### 9. Example: DOT Processes Hindered

The National Conference of State Legislatures stated on November 6th of 2023,

*(The National Conference of State Legislatures, established in 1975, is a "nonpartisan public officials' association composed of sitting state legislators" from the states, territories and commonwealths of the United States.)* **ncsl.org, “What Happens to Government Services During a Federal Shutdown?”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/what-happens-to-government-services-during-a-federal-shutdown>

“A shutdown’s impact on DOT agencies varies considerably because most federal highway, transit and highway safety programs receive mandatory spending from the Highway Trust Fund, not discretionary funds, making them generally resilient to shutdown effects. However, certain agencies would experience limitations. The Federal Rail Administration would continue rail accident investigations and maintain an inspector presence, but it would be unable to advance rulemaking efforts, including those related to railroad safety. Similarly, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration could investigate hazardous materials accidents, facilities and shippers but could not conduct program development or rulemaking. The Federal Aviation Administration would face a unique challenge in a shutdown, not only because of a lapse in funding, but also its programs must be reauthorized by Dec. 31, 2023. If funding lapses and programs are not reauthorized, over 17,000 FAA employees would be furloughed, and projects funded by the Airport Improvement Program would cease. The program funds most safety infrastructure projects, including airfield and access roadways, at airport complexes.”



## 10. Past Shutdowns Caused Numerous Closures

USAFacts, a not-for-profit data collection agency, stated on August 1st of 2024,

*(USAFacts is a not-for-profit organization and website that provides data and reports on the United States population, its government's finances, and government's impact on society.)*

usafacts.org, "Everything you need to know about a government shutdown" (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://usafacts.org/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-a-government-shutdown/>

"The specific agencies and services affected by a government shutdown depend on the details of the funding legislation in effect at the time of the shutdown. Past shutdowns have affected numerous services and agencies, including:

- National parks and monuments
- Federal museums
- Federal research projects
- Processing of certain government benefits
- IRS taxpayer services"

## 11. The Government Needs the Entire Workforce

The Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization published a 2023 report detailing the specific numbers of employees that would be furloughed. They stated,

*(The Partnership for Public Service is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C. whose mission is to inspire a new generation of civil servants and to transform the way government works.) Partnership for Public Service, "How the Federal Workforce is Impacted During a Government Shutdown" (Accessed March 30, 2025)*

<https://ourpublicservice.org/fed-figures/the-federal-workforce-during-a-government-shutdown/>

"The public deserves a government that delivers on its mission, which requires the important work of the entire federal workforce. The data above highlights the direct impact that a federal government shutdown can have on millions of civilian federal employees and active-duty military personnel. However, these are not the only people impacted by a shutdown. Many federal contractors would be adversely affected, forcing more furloughs or layoffs of employees. Additionally, there is the impact on the families of federal employees and military members. Ultimately, shutdowns significantly hamper our government's ability to provide critical services to the public."

## 12. Many Services Could Be In Danger

The Peter G. Peterson Foundation stated on August 25th of 2023.

*(The Peter G. Peterson Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on addressing long-term fiscal challenges facing the United States, particularly related to national debt and budget deficits. It works to promote fiscal responsibility through research, advocacy, and public dialogue. The foundation aims to raise awareness about the economic impact of growing debt and encourage policy reforms for sustainable fiscal policies.)* **The Peter G. Peterson Foundation, “Four Reasons Why a Government Shutdown is Harmful”** (Accessed February 24, 2025)

<https://www.pgpf.org/article/four-reasons-why-a-government-shutdown-is-harmful/>

“While programs such as Social Security and Medicare would remain largely unaffected by a government shutdown, other programs and services could be interrupted by the temporary furlough of “nonessential” government staff. In 2013, OMB showed that the shutdown that year disrupted scientific research, services for veterans and seniors, and health and safety inspections by the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the National Transportation Safety Board, among other programs.”

## Harm 2: Shutdowns Harm the Federal Workforce

### 13. 2018 Shutdown Left 800,000 Without Pay

According to the website of Congresswoman Judy Chu, accessed in March 2023,

*(Judy May Chu is an American politician serving as the U.S. representative for California's 28th congressional district. A member of the Democratic Party, she has held a seat in Congress since 2009, representing California's 32nd congressional district until redistricting.)* [chu.house.gov](https://chu.house.gov/resources-workers-during-government-shutdown), “Resources for Workers During Government Shutdown” (Accessed March 30, 2025) <https://chu.house.gov/resources-workers-during-government-shutdown>

“The government shutdown has forced 800,000 federal workers and millions of contractors to go without pay since December 22nd 2018. I have voted repeatedly to open the government immediately and voted to pass a bill to provide back pay for workers. But that does not help with the bills and expenses that need to be paid today. Below is a list of resources if you or somebody you know is being negatively impacted by the federal shutdown. And please feel free to reach out to my Pasadena Office at 626-304-0110.”

### 14. Shutdowns Also Affect Contractors

The Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization published a 2023 report detailing the specific numbers of employees that would be furloughed. They stated,

*(The Partnership for Public Service is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C. whose mission is to inspire a new generation of civil servants and to transform the way government works. )* **Partnership for Public Service, “How the Federal Workforce is Impacted During a Government Shutdown”** (Accessed March 30, 2025) <https://ourpublicservice.org/fed-figures/the-federal-workforce-during-a-government-shutdown/>

“The public deserves a government that delivers on its mission, which requires the important work of the entire federal workforce. The data above highlights the direct impact that a federal government shutdown can have on millions of civilian federal employees and active-duty military personnel. However, these are not the only people impacted by a shutdown. Many federal contractors would be adversely affected, forcing more furloughs or layoffs of employees. Additionally, there is the impact on the families of federal employees and military members. Ultimately, shutdowns significantly hamper our government’s ability to provide critical services to the public.”

### 15. Example: DHS Estimates 72% of Workers Left Without Pay

The National Conference of State Legislatures wrote on November 6th of 2023,

[ncsl.org](https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/what-happens-to-government-services-during-a-federal-shutdown), “What Happens to Government Services During a Federal Shutdown?” (Accessed March 30, 2025) <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/what-happens-to-government-services-during-a-federal-shutdown> Department of Homeland Security

“Department of Homeland Security. The department estimates that 72% of its workforce would go without pay in a government shutdown. This includes Customs and Border Protection officers and disaster response officials. Specific state funding impacted includes:

- A portion of DHS funding to cities in border states that helps cover the costs of sheltering migrants. Funding drawdowns might not be possible, and no new awards could be made during a shutdown.
- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency would suspend physical and cybersecurity assessments for state government and industry, including election officials.
- Federal training programs for state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies would be suspended.”



## 16. Example: Johnny Zuagar

Brian Witte, a writer for AP News, stated on December 20th of 2024,

*(The Associated Press (AP) is a global, not-for-profit news agency founded in 1846, known for providing fast, accurate, and unbiased news in various formats to its members, international subscribers, and commercial customers.)*

apnews.com, “Deal spares federal workers before Christmas but there’s concern about possible job cuts under Trump” (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://apnews.com/article/budget-federal-workers-shutdown-77886d390eb5e69fd961109297736230>

“ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) – Johnny Zuagar said he tried to hide his worries about a potential government shutdown from his three boys as he weighed how much to spend on Christmas presents. ‘I’ve got to keep a poker face,’ Zuagar, a statistician at the U.S. Census Bureau, said when thinking about his boys, ages 14, 12 and 6. ‘You’re just trying to take that worry off of your family.’ Like thousands of federal workers, Zuagar had been navigating the holidays with the spirit of the season overtaken by an air of gloom and uncertainty. The efforts in Congress to reach an agreement on keeping the government open had cast a cloud over the holidays for many federal workers facing the prospect of furloughs in the days before Christmas. But Congress passed a three-month spending bill early Saturday, just after the midnight deadline, and President Joe Biden signed it into law hours later. There was no shutdown.”

## 17. Background: Shutdowns Affect Non-Essential Workers

USAFacts, a not-for-profit data collection agency, stated on August 1st of 2024,

*(USAFacts is a not-for-profit organization and website that provides data and reports on the United States population, its government's finances, and government's impact on society.)*

usafacts.org, “Everything you need to know about a government shutdown” (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://usafacts.org/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-a-government-shutdown/>

“A shutdown primarily affects non-essential federal employees, as well as people and businesses that rely on government services. Many non-essential government employees are temporarily furloughed during a shutdown, while essential personnel whose funding is not dependent on annual appropriations bills—such as military service members, law enforcement agents, and air traffic controllers—continue to work. Federal employees classified as “excepted” are in roles whose funding is dependent on appropriations bills but who are still required to work during a shutdown. Agencies are legally required to compensate these employees for their work during a shutdown, even if funding is not immediately available to pay them during the shutdown.”

## Harm 3: Shutdowns Are Costly

### 18. Shutdowns Harm Economic Growth and Certainty

The Peter G. Peterson Foundation stated on August 25th of 2023.

*(The Peter G. Peterson Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on addressing long-term fiscal challenges facing the United States, particularly related to national debt and budget deficits. It works to promote fiscal responsibility through research, advocacy, and public dialogue. The foundation aims to raise awareness about the economic impact of growing debt and encourage policy reforms for sustainable fiscal policies.)*

**The Peter G. Peterson Foundation, “Four Reasons Why a Government Shutdown is Harmful”** (Accessed February 24, 2025)  
<https://www.pgpf.org/article/four-reasons-why-a-government-shutdown-is-harmful/>

“Government shutdowns can harm economic growth and certainty. A 2013 Macroeconomic Advisors paper found that government shutdowns can impose costs on the economy such as increasing the unemployment rate, lowering the growth in gross domestic product (GDP), and raising the cost of borrowing. The Bureau of Economic Analysis estimated that the government shutdown in October 2013 reduced fourth-quarter GDP that year by 0.3 percentage points. An S&P Global analysis found that a government shutdown in 2017 could have reduced real fourth-quarter GDP growth by \$6.5 billion per week. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the partial government shutdown that lasted from December 22, 2018 until January 25, 2019 reduced real GDP by \$11 billion over the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019 (although they assumed that much of that reduction would have been made up later in the year). Additionally, a shutdown can cause disruptions in sectors of the economy. For instance, a Partnership for Public Service report noted that the last government shutdown (which lasted from December 2018 to January 2019) halted two major Small Business Administration loan programs. Those programs typically dispense nearly \$200 million a day to small and midsize U.S. businesses; lack of access to such loans hindered business plans and caused economic hardship for thousands of entrepreneurs and their employees. Shutdowns also impact regulatory offices like the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau within the Department of the Treasury. An example— without the necessary certifications and approvals to operate, production for craft breweries throughout the country stalled, thereby reducing revenue for over 7,300 producers who provide more than 135,000 jobs.”

### 19. Shutdowns Have Both Direct and Indirect Negative Impact

The Congressional Research Service stated on September 22nd of 2023.

*(The Congressional Research Service (CRS), a part of the Library of Congress, is a nonpartisan public policy research arm of the United States Congress that provides research and analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate.)*

**Congressional Research Service, “Economic Effects of Government Shutdowns”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)  
<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN12248>

“If Congress allows appropriations to lapse on October 1, a federal government shutdown would begin.

Government shutdowns have direct and indirect impacts on the economy, the severity of which depend largely on the shutdown’s length and scope. This Insight discusses the economic effects of shutdowns, including effects on output, employment, and government spending. For information on the impact of a shutdown on government operations, see CRS Report R47693, Government Shutdowns and Executive Branch Operations: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), coordinated by Taylor N. Riccard.”



## 20. Shutdowns Harm Consumer and Investor Sentiment

The Congressional Research Service stated on September 22nd of 2023.

*(The Congressional Research Service (CRS), a part of the Library of Congress, is a nonpartisan public policy research arm of the United States Congress that provides research and analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate.)*

**Congressional Research Service, “Economic Effects of Government Shutdowns”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN12248>

“Shutdowns can indirectly affect other components of GDP apart from government spending. Notably, personal consumption expenditures, which typically make up about two-thirds of GDP, may be indirectly decreased if delayed or stopped payments affect consumption decisions. For example, federal workers may decrease their spending as a result of not receiving a paycheck on time. In the past, federal workers were uncertain whether they would receive retroactive pay when the shutdown ended. However, P.L. 116-1 required retroactive pay for federal workers in future shutdowns, which may reduce effects on consumer spending. Depending on its length, a shutdown could also harm consumer and investor sentiment, reducing private consumption and investment. Other disruptions to permitting, licensing, and verifications could lead to delays in lending and trade activity, for example. Indirect effects are more difficult to accurately measure and, therefore, are often not included in estimates of economic effects of shutdowns. However, some research suggests that these effects can be significant. For example, a Goldman Sachs survey indicated that two out of five Americans lowered consumption during the FY2014 shutdown.”

## 21. Shutdowns Reduce Growth, Cause Spending

The United States Congressional Joint Economic Committee stated on September 5th of 2023.

*(The Joint Economic Committee (JEC) is one of four standing joint committees of the U.S. Congress. The committee was established as a part of the Employment Act of 1946, which deemed the committee responsible for reporting the current economic condition of the United States and for making suggestions for improvement to the economy.)*

**www.jec.senate.gov, “The Economic Costs of a Republican Shutdown”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2023/9/the-economic-costs-of-a-republican-shutdown>

“Evidence from past government shutdowns shows that they reduce economic growth, create financial uncertainty for families, and cause unnecessary government spending. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that the five-week partial government shutdown in 2018-2019 reduced economic output by \$11 billion in the following two quarters—including \$3 billion that the U.S. economy never regained. Moody's Analytics estimated that the 2013 full government shutdown reduced GDP growth by \$20 billion. At the time of the 2013 shutdown, consumer confidence fell, threatening the economic recovery following the Great Recession. A shutdown this fall would jeopardize the improvements in consumer confidence as inflation has returned to more normal levels. A shutdown would be especially disruptive on the heels of the latest debt-limit crisis and the recent downgrade of U.S. treasuries by the credit agency Fitch. A Republican-led government shutdown would create more doubt about whether the United States can reliably manage its finances. Government shutdowns may ultimately add to the federal deficit due to the costs of stopping and restarting government programs. According to data from 2013, the cost of the full government shutdown in lost work-hours totaled at least \$2 billion.”



## 22. Shutdowns Cause Large Monetary Losses

The Peter G. Peterson Foundation stated on August 25th of 2023.

*(The Peter G. Peterson Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on addressing long-term fiscal challenges facing the United States, particularly related to national debt and budget deficits. It works to promote fiscal responsibility through research, advocacy, and public dialogue. The foundation aims to raise awareness about the economic impact of growing debt and encourage policy reforms for sustainable fiscal policies.)*

**The Peter G. Peterson Foundation, “Four Reasons Why a Government Shutdown is Harmful”** (Accessed February 24, 2025)  
<https://www.pgpf.org/article/four-reasons-why-a-government-shutdown-is-harmful/>

“Government shutdowns can harm economic growth and certainty. A 2013 Macroeconomic Advisors paper found that government shutdowns can impose costs on the economy such as increasing the unemployment rate, lowering the growth in gross domestic product (GDP), and raising the cost of borrowing. The Bureau of Economic Analysis estimated that the government shutdown in October 2013 reduced fourth-quarter GDP that year by 0.3 percentage points. An S&P Global analysis found that a government shutdown in 2017 could have reduced real fourth-quarter GDP growth by \$6.5 billion per week. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the partial government shutdown that lasted from December 22, 2018 until January 25, 2019 reduced real GDP by \$11 billion over the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019 (although they assumed that much of that reduction would have been made up later in the year). Additionally, a shutdown can cause disruptions in sectors of the economy. For instance, a Partnership for Public Service report noted that the last government shutdown (which lasted from December 2018 to January 2019) halted two major Small Business Administration loan programs. Those programs typically dispense nearly \$200 million a day to small and midsize U.S. businesses; lack of access to such loans hindered business plans and caused economic hardship for thousands of entrepreneurs and their employees. Shutdowns also impact regulatory offices like the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau within the Department of the Treasury. An example—without the necessary certifications and approvals to operate, production for craft breweries throughout the country stalled, thereby reducing revenue for over 7,300 producers who provide more than 135,000 jobs.”

## Plan

### 23. Text of the End Government Shutdowns Act (S.2041)

The End Government Shutdowns Act, proposed by Senator Mike Braunn, Senator James E. Risch, Senator Shelley Moore Capito, Senator Roger F. Wickerr, Senator Mike Crapo, Senator Marco Rubio, and Senator Mike Lee, as recorded by Congress.gov on June 15th of 2023. (Congress.gov is the official website for the United States federal government's legislative information. It provides information about bills, resolutions, committee reports, and more.)

Congress.gov, "S.2041 - End Government Shutdowns Act" (Accessed February 24, 2025)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2041/text>

# S. 2041

To amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 15, 2023

Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. LEE)  
introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on  
Appropriations

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## A BILL

To amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. Short title.

This Act may be cited as the "End Government Shutdowns Act."

### SEC. 2. Automatic continuing appropriations.

(a) IN GENERAL.—[Chapter 13](#) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after [section 1310](#) the following new section:





## “§ 1311. Continuing appropriations

“(a) (1) If any appropriation measure for a fiscal year is not enacted before the beginning of such fiscal year or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect, there are appropriated such sums as may be necessary to continue any program, project, or activity for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year—

“(A) in the corresponding appropriation Act for such preceding fiscal year; or

“(B) if the corresponding appropriation bill for such preceding fiscal year did not become law, then in a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year.

“(2) (A) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be at a rate of operations not in excess of the lower of—

“(i) 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for in the regular appropriation Act providing for such program, project, or activity for the preceding fiscal year;

“(ii) in the absence of such an Act, 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for such program, project, or activity pursuant to a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year; or

“(iii) 100 percent of the annualized rate of operations provided for in the most recently enacted joint resolution making continuing appropriations for part of that fiscal year or any funding levels established under the provisions of this Act,

for the period of 120 days. After the first 120-day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. For each subsequent 90-day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. The 90-day period reductions shall extend beyond the last day of that fiscal year.

“(B) If this section is in effect at the end of a fiscal year, funding levels shall continue as provided in this section for the next fiscal year.

“(3) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any fiscal year pursuant to this section for a program, project, or activity shall be available for the period beginning with the first day of a lapse in appropriations and ending with the date on



which the applicable regular appropriation bill for such fiscal year becomes law (whether or not such law provides for such program, project, or activity) or a continuing resolution making appropriations becomes law, as the case may be.

“(b) An appropriation or funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be subject to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for the preceding fiscal year, or authority granted for such program, project, or activity under current law.

“(c) Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a regular appropriation bill or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations until the end of a fiscal year providing for such program, project, or activity for such period becomes law.

“(d) This section shall not apply to a program, project, or activity during a fiscal year if any other provision of law (other than an authorization of appropriations)—

“(1) makes an appropriation, makes funds available, or grants authority for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period; or

“(2) specifically provides that no appropriation shall be made, no funds shall be made available, or no authority shall be granted for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections of [chapter 13](#) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to [section 1310](#) the following new item:



# Solvency

## ACRs Have Been Successful in the States

### 24. Auto-CRs Work for the States and Could Improve Congress

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025,

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)*

**Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Fortunately, we can avoid such disruptions. In the wake of the U.S. government’s most recent shutdown, bipartisan support surged for legislation to provide for automatic continuing resolutions (auto-CRs). Under current law, if Congress fails to pass new appropriations bills or a CR before the prior funding expires, parts of the government cease operations. Auto-CRs ensure that funding for programs will continue, thereby preventing such government shutdowns. Shutdowns impose unnecessary costs on the public, on federal workers, and on Congress. They are also unnecessary. Many state governments have auto-CRs. States continue to enact appropriations nonetheless, and they reap the benefits of a more coherent process. Auto-CRs have the potential to improve Congress as an institution while producing tangible policy benefits. Despite some concerns, the benefits are likely to outweigh the risks. Auto-CRs would probably have minimal influence on total spending levels and are highly unlikely to continue at length. Moreover, policymakers have tools to mitigate potential disincentives to do regular appropriations. Adopting auto-CRs is one of several important improvements to the budget process that Congress should consider.”

### 25. Twenty States Successfully Use Auto-CRs

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025,

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)*

**Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Twenty states avoid shutdowns entirely or in part because of auto-CRs. Of those, 13 have relatively comprehensive auto-CRs to preserve spending programs while policymakers finalize regular budget and appropriations legislation. The National Association of State Budget Officers provides more details here on pages 71 through 74.”



## 26. ACRs Have Worked in Rhode Island

The Minnesota House Research Department stated in an undated article accessed in May 2025, no date given, but the document was written in 2019 or after due to context. (*Minnesota House Research Department provides nonpartisan, neutral research and legal services to the Minnesota House of Representatives. They support the work of House committees, confidentially draft legislation, answer research questions when requested by individual House members, summarize bills and acts, and produce publications on topical policy issues.*) [www.house.mn.gov, Automatic Continuing Appropriations and Government Shutdowns](https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/contappr.pdf) (Accessed on April 7, 2025) <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/contappr.pdf>

“In Rhode Island, although a similar law has been in place since 1935, it is rarely invoked. In 1992 and 1993 lawmakers failed to adopt the annual budget on time and in both instances the new budget was enacted roughly two weeks later. In 2017, the law was invoked on July 1 and prevented a shutdown until lawmakers enacted the new budget in early August. As in Wisconsin, Rhode Island lawmakers pass one large budget bill, and entitlement spending is not limited to prior year levels. The law effectively prevents government shutdowns in the rare occasion that a fiscal year begins without a new budget in place. The law does not appear to decrease lawmakers’ incentive to enact a new budget.”

## 27. ACRs Have Worked in Wisconsin

The Minnesota House Research Department stated in an undated article accessed in May 2025, no date given, but the document was written in 2019 or after due to context. (*Minnesota House Research Department provides nonpartisan, neutral research and legal services to the Minnesota House of Representatives. They support the work of House committees, confidentially draft legislation, answer research questions when requested by individual House members, summarize bills and acts, and produce publications on topical policy issues.*) [www.house.mn.gov, Automatic Continuing Appropriations and Government Shutdowns](https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/contappr.pdf) (Accessed on April 7, 2025) <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/contappr.pdf>

“For more than 50 years, Wisconsin’s budget-making process has included an automatic continuing appropriations component. Wisconsin lawmakers often do not meet the June 30 deadline to pass a new budget. When a fiscal year begins without a new budget in place, automatic funding at current-rate levels continues for all programs funded under the previous state budget. Sometimes a political impasse delays enactment of the new budget; on other occasions the governor simply takes a few weeks to review the budget bill before signing it. Of note, appropriations for entitlement programs are not capped at prior levels but are allowed to fluctuate up or down in order to make all required payments. Although the continuing appropriations statute decreases the pressure to enact a state budget on time, Wisconsin lawmakers have always enacted a new budget eventually. In the past five decades, the latest date of budget enactment was November 4, 1971, approximately four months after the new budget period began. In more recent times, the budget in 2007 was not final until October 27 of that year. Wisconsin legislative staff believes the law is effective in preventing government shutdowns, and inevitable passage of the budget is not threatened because other factors, such as the part-time nature of the legislature and pressure from local units of government and the general public, force members to pass a new budget eventually. Also, while the legislature or governor have declared an emergency to bypass this restriction, Wisconsin law generally prevents lawmakers from passing any bill appropriating more than \$10,000 or decreasing revenues by the same amount until the budget is passed.”



# Advantages

## Adv 1: Benefit from Continuing Government Services

### 28. Auto-CRs Ensure Funding Continues, Prevent Shutdowns

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025.

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Fortunately, we can avoid such disruptions. In the wake of the U.S. government’s most recent shutdown, bipartisan support surged for legislation to provide for automatic continuing resolutions (auto-CRs). Under current law, if Congress fails to pass new appropriations bills or a CR before the prior funding expires, parts of the government cease operations. Auto-CRs ensure that funding for programs will continue, thereby preventing such government shutdowns.”

## Adv 2: Federal Workforce Won’t be Disrupted

### 29. Plan Brings Stability for Federal Workers and Families

The Federal News Networked reported on the remarks of Rep. Portman, sponsor of the End Government Shutdowns Act, on January 30th of 2019:

*(Daisy Thornton is the digital managing editor for Federal News Network. She oversees the team responsible for editing reporters’ stories for AP and Federal News Network style, curating the website, posting stories to social media, and sending email newsletters and alerts.)* **Daisy Thornton, Federal News Network, “Is an automatic CR the answer to government shutdowns?”** (Federal News Network is the key source of breaking news, information and analysis for the people who support the missions of federal agencies. FNN addresses federal agency managers, policy makers and contractors. Our mission is to help federal managers meet their mission. Our news coverage is non-partisan, non-political and designed to help executives more clearly understand and make better decisions about issues affecting their agencies and their companies.) (Accessed May 25, 2025)

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/about-federal-news-network/>

“Portman’s bill, the End Government Shutdowns Act, currently has the most support, with a total of 19 cosponsors, including Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Mike Lee (R-Utah), and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska). It would provide for an automatic CR in the event of a lapse in appropriations. If a full appropriations bill is not passed in 120 days, it would then cut funding across the board for all agencies by 1 percent. Another 1 percent cut would follow every 90 days thereafter. ‘Moving forward, we should end government shutdowns for good,’ Portman said in a statement. ‘This bipartisan legislation will accomplish that goal, providing lawmakers with more time to reach a responsible resolution to budget negotiations, giving federal workers and their families more stability, and ensuring we avoid disruptions that ultimately hurt our economy, taxpayers and working families.’”



## Adv 3: Avoid Economic Damage

### 30. Auto-CRs Improve Spending Efficiency

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025,

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Auto-CRs could improve spending efficiency. Federal agencies often must delay signing contracts until spending is finalized in a December appropriations package, but then they are rushed to spend in less than a full fiscal year. Short-term CRs inhibit efficient contracting due to the Anti-Deficiency Act, but an auto-CR lets agencies move forward at the start of the fiscal year.”

**Impact:** We can increase spending efficiency through Auto-CRs, something that current short-term CRs cannot accomplish.



## Closers

### 31. Benefits of Auto-CRs

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025,

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Auto-CRs have clear policy benefits. They avoid the resource waste involved in planning for shutdowns and furloughs, maintain government services, and reduce backlogs.”

### 32. Benefits outweigh the risks

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025,

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Despite some concerns, the benefits are likely to outweigh the risks. Auto-CRs would probably have minimal influence on total spending levels and are highly unlikely to continue at length. Moreover, policymakers have tools to mitigate potential disincentives to do regular appropriations. Adopting auto-CRs is one of several important improvements to the budget process that Congress should consider.”

# Answers to NEG Arguments

## Negligence of Constitutional Duties

*Although the negative team may try to argue that ACRs allow Congress to neglect their budgetary duties, the example of the states and other political realities do not support this conclusion. Furthermore, ACRs allow lawmakers to create the most responsible budgets rather than bullying each other with the threat of a shutdown.*

### 33. States with Auto-CRs Continue to Make Budgets, Avoid Brinkmanship

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025.

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“States with auto-CRs continue to appropriate. Final spending packages are sometimes delayed, but the delay rates are similar between auto-CR and shutdown states. In 2018, for example, 13 states needed extra time to pass budgets and appropriations, but they all ultimately did. Of the tardy states, five of the 20 with auto-CRs (25 percent) took extra time while eight of 30 that risk shutdowns (27 percent) did. Auto-CR states, however, avoid the lost productivity, brinkmanship, and other disruptions from preparing for or experiencing a shutdown. The federal government, on the other hand, has operated under CRs an average of five months per year since 1997, sometimes covering an entire fiscal year.”

**Impact:** States with auto-CRs performed similarly to states without them, proving that auto-CRs do not encourage operating without a budget any more than the status quo. Auto-CRs had the added benefit of avoiding all of the toxic politicking where legislators threaten to—and sometimes actually do—shut down the government.



### 34. ACRs Encourage Bipartisan Discussion / SQ Threatens Shutdowns

Jessica Tollestrup, an analyst on Congress and the Legislative Process, wrote for the Congressional Research Service on August 20th of 2015.

*(Jessica Tollestrup is an analyst on Congress and the Legislative Process at the Congressional Research Service. The Congressional Research Service (CRS), a part of the Library of Congress, is a nonpartisan public policy research arm of the United States Congress that provides research and analysis to committees and members of both the House and Senate.)*  
sgp.fas.org, “Automatic Continuing Resolutions: Background and Overview of Recent Proposals” (Accessed March 31, 2025) <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R41948.pdf>

“Some who have supported an ACR mechanism have perceived the tenor of the appropriations process as being less than ideal for producing an agreement on spending priorities. For example, the House Appropriations Committee report on H.R. 853 (106th Congress) noted: ‘Both Congress and the President have used the threat of a government shutdown to extort concessions from the other side. During the 104th Congress, the Congress used the threat of a shutdown to try to force the President to agree to tax cuts and significant reductions in discretionary spending. Last year, the President used the threat of a shutdown to win higher levels of discretionary spending—but not without the Congress wrangling large increases in defense spending.’ The remedy for this, according to some previous proponents of an ACR mechanism, would be to eliminate the threat of a government shutdown so that the tone of the negotiations would be less combative. This, some have argued, would serve to ‘encourage more bipartisan discussions on appropriations bills and discourage the past practices of holding appropriations bills hostage to last-minute negotiations.’”

**Impact:** Rather than allowing Congress to bypass its Constitutional duties, our plan would encourage Congress to do their jobs in a less toxic atmosphere than the status quo.

## 35. ACRs Can Improve Overall Governance

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025.

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)* **Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”** (Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Perhaps more important than the direct benefits, auto-CRs can improve overall governance and strengthen Congress as an institution. Few members of Congress truly want to shut down broad areas of the government. Even so, some have attempted to use an imminent funding deadline to gain leverage for an ideologically-charged policy that lacks broad support. The more frequent outcome is that leadership and top appropriators produce a package behind closed doors and force members on short notice into a binary choice: leadership’s deal or shutdown.

An auto-CR reduces the stakes. It alters the choice to one of status quo spending or the leadership deal (or, ideally, regular appropriations). This should encourage more consensus-based packages that solid majorities of Congress can support, which implies a more inclusive process with real floor deliberation and amendments. Auto-CRs could benefit leaders by alleviating resentment from other members over having to swallow negotiated deals at the last minute.”

## Continuation of Essential Services

*The negative team may try to argue that essential services will continue even during a shutdown. The important thing to clarify is that your harm isn’t about essential services. Your harm is that many other important services will not continue. You can find some evidence of that under “Harm 1: Shutdowns Disrupt Government Services” (cards 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12).*

## Rarity and Length of Shutdowns

*The negative team may try to downplay the harm of shutdowns by claiming that they are rare and short. Although that is true, they do happen! And when they happen, they cause a lot of problems. You can respond to this with evidence from all three harms (cards 8–22).*

## Tools to Avoid Shutdowns

*The negative team may argue that Congress already has the tools it needs to avoid shutdowns, but despite those tools shutdowns do happen! You can find evidence of this under “Background: 4 Shutdowns Lasted Over a Day” (card 2). Also, you can make the arguments listed under “Negligence of Constitutional Duties” (cards 33 & 34) about the current toxic environment where legislators can bully each other by threatening shutdowns.*



## Incentives for Negotiation

*Although the negative team may say that the threat of a shutdown can be a positive tool for negotiation, you can use the evidence below plus the evidence under “Negligence of Constitutional Duties” (cards 33, 34, & 35) to argue that these “negotiations” are actually disruptive and counterproductive.*

### 36. The Threat of Shutdowns Increases Polarization, Erodes Trust

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget stated on March 5th of 2025.

*(The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (CRFB) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and addressing the national debt. It advocates for policies that reduce deficits, improve government spending, and ensure long-term economic stability. CRFB conducts research, offers policy recommendations, and engages in public education to help guide decision-makers in fiscal matters.)*

**Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Better Budget Process Initiative: Automatic CRs Can Improve the Appropriations Process”**  
(Accessed March 31, 2025)

<https://www.crfb.org/papers/better-budget-process-initiative-automatic-crs-can-improve-appropriations-process>

“Shutdowns contribute to polarization. They foster unrealistic notions of procedural leverage and allow factions to derail appropriations. Many members feeling excluded from the process can erode trust. Knowing that leadership will produce the final package also encourages poison-pill amendments, to which leaders have reacted by further limiting amendments, which can antagonize members further.

Of course, other polarization-enhancing factors exist that an auto-CR would not address. Ideally, making the process for discretionary spending less contentious would give members of Congress more ability to focus on those other challenges.”

## Irresponsible Spending

*The negative team may argue that ACRs increase irresponsible spending by allowing the previous year’s budget to remain in place, even if funding for certain programs isn’t needed anymore. You can counter this argument in three ways:*

1. *Explain that your plan does not keep funding for programs that are designated by law to end at a certain time. Additionally, after 120 days, funding for all other programs covered by the bill decreases by 1% each additional 90 days. Thus, funding automatically decreases the longer the ACR is in place. (See text of the bill under “Plan.”)*
2. *Use the data on the states (card 33) that shows that states with and without ACRs have similar delays in budgeting. In other words, budgets get adopted according to similar timelines whether or not an ACR is in place. Because there is no significant incentive to delay normal budgeting, very little “irresponsible spending” would occur.*
3. *Counter this disadvantage with the harms of the status quo. Although some money may be wasted, a government shutdown would have far more negative effects, including significant economic losses.*



## Common Sense Policy

*Making a budget IS a common sense policy—but Congress sometimes fails to do so by the deadline. You can extend all three harms that occur when Congress fails to create a budget and as well as the damage done by the threat of a shutdown as shown in cards 33-36.*

## New Programs and Needs

*The negative team may argue that auto-CRs cannot fund new programs. One way to respond is below: ACRs are temporary and new programs eventually get funded. Couple this response with card 33 that has data about how states with ACRs don't delay budgeting any more than states without ACRs.*

### 37. ACRs are Temporary

In their summary of the bill Congress.gov reported that,

*(Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information, providing access to bills, resolutions, voting records, and more, maintained by the Library of Congress using data from the House of Representatives and Senate.)*

**congress.gov, “S.2041 - End Government Shutdowns Act”** (Accessed March 30, 2025)

<https://www.congress.gov/bills/118th-congress/senate-bill/2041>

*“This bill provides continuing appropriations to prevent a government shutdown if any appropriations measure for a fiscal year has not been enacted before the fiscal year begins or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect. For an initial 120-day period, the bill provides appropriations to continue programs, projects, and activities for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year. The bill reduces the continuing appropriations by 1% after the first 120-day period and by an additional 1% for each subsequent 90-day period until the applicable appropriations legislation is enacted.”*

**Impact:** The Automatic Continuing Resolution is only a temporary fix to avoid a shutdown, not a long-term funding solution. Once it expires, Congress must still pass new appropriations bills to fund updated programs and priorities. They may take just slightly longer, but new programs will still come.

